

## **Assembly Joint Resolution No. 18**

### **RESOLUTION CHAPTER 125**

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 18—Relative to Sickle Cell Awareness Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 28, 2011.]

#### **LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST**

AJR 18, Carter. Sickle Cell Awareness Month.

This measure would recognize September 2011 as Sickle Cell Awareness Month in California and would urge the President and the Congress of the United States to restore funding for sickle cell anemia centers and research and to make sickle cell anemia and other genetic hemoglobinopathies a public health priority.

WHEREAS, Sickle cell anemia and sickle cell disease, though used interchangeably, refer to a group of inherited disorders that affect the red blood cells; and

WHEREAS, Red blood cells with normal hemoglobin are smooth and round, and glide easily through blood vessels. In the bodies of people with sickle cell disease, their cells assume a curved or “sickle” shape and become hard and sticky, blocking blood flow and preventing oxygen from getting through tissues and causing severe pain and damage to organs; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that over 70,000 Americans have sickle cell anemia. About 2.5 million Americans have the sickle cell trait, meaning they carry one copy of the gene for the disease; and

WHEREAS, Sickle cell anemia occurs in 1 out of every 400 African American births and 1 out of every 19,000 Hispanic American births. The sickle cell trait occurs in approximately 1 out of 12 African Americans and 1 out of 100 for Latino populations; and

WHEREAS, The Sickle Cell Control Act was signed into law in 1972 by President Richard Nixon after pledging that his administration would “reverse the record of neglect on the dreaded disease” and to increase funding and expand sickle cell disease-related activities including the development of comprehensive sickle cell centers; and

WHEREAS, Over 30 years later, the Sickle Cell Treatment Act of 2003 was signed into law; and

WHEREAS, Originating in 1975, when the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America and its member organizations began conducting month-long events in September to call attention to sickle cell disease and the need to address the problem at national and local levels, chose September as National Sickle Cell Awareness Month for the public to reflect on children

and adults whose lives, education, and careers have been affected by this disease; and

WHEREAS, Since 2002, the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America has worked with congressional champions to authorize and fund a number of national sickle cell disease legislative programs that provide support for patients suffering from sickle cell disease, while encouraging enhanced research intended to identify next-generation treatments and a cure for sickle cell disease; and

WHEREAS, The effort to have Sickle Cell Awareness Month officially recognized at all levels succeeded in 1983 when the House of Representatives unanimously passed, and the President signed, the first resolution introduced by the Congressional Black Caucus designating September as National Sickle Cell Anemia Awareness Month in 1983; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly,* That the Legislature of California recognizes September 2011 as Sickle Cell Awareness Month in California; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the California State Legislature urges the President and the Congress of the United States to restore funding for sickle cell anemia centers and research and to make sickle cell anemia and other genetic hemoglobinopathies a public health priority; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the author for appropriate distribution.